



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Three Minutes

USAID programs are recognized



Two USAID-supported programs received two honorable mentions from the Excellence in Justice Corporation. [See page 2](#)

Zaragoza opens its Justice House

About 35,000 residents of this Antioquia municipality will benefit from the opening of the new Justice House. USAID has financed 48 of the 53 Houses currently in operation. [See page 4](#)

Final of the Third Oral Mock Trial Competition

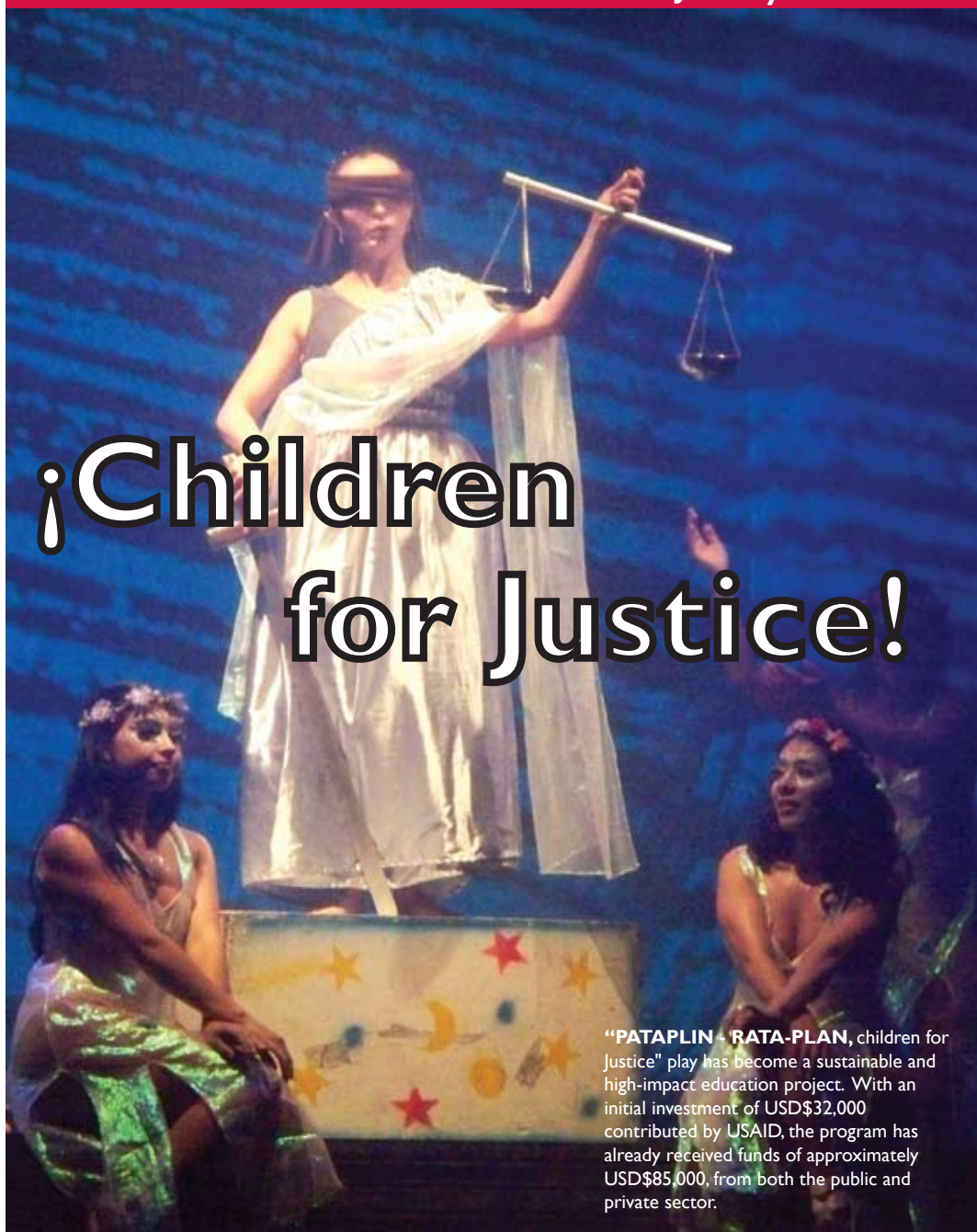


Two students from Cali's Universidad Javeriana were named the winners of the Third Oral Mock Trial Competition among universities. [See page 3](#)

JUSTICIA AL DÍA

Bulletin of Activities No. 03 – January / March 2009

¡Children for Justice!



"PATAPLIN - RATA-PLAN, children for Justice" play has become a sustainable and high-impact education project. With an initial investment of USD\$32,000 contributed by USAID, the program has already received funds of approximately USD\$85,000, from both the public and private sector.

WITH THE SUPPORT of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the "Pataplín Rata-Plán, Children for Justice" play was presented nine more times at the end of last year. More than 700 buses transported over 30,000 children to Bogota's "El Palacio de los Deportes" sports arena to learn about basic principles of justice. [See page 3](#)

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FULL BACKING FOR CONCILIATORS



Three more Conciliation Centers, known as “Puntos de Atención de Conciliación en Equidad” (PACE for its acronym in Spanish), now have computer equipment, office supplies and furniture, thanks to the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). Conciliators in Teruel and La Plata, in Huila province, and Villavicencio, in Meta province, are now able to offer better services. Another 10 locations are expected to receive similar assistance in March.

REFORMS TO JUSTICE OF THE PEACE LAW

Conclusions from six recent USAID-financed forums were presented on Dec. 15 to the Colombian government to help in reforming the country's 1999 Justice of the Peace Law. The regional forums took place over the past six months. It is expected that these conclusions will serve as an important contribution to this law's reform process.

CSJ RECOGNIZES JRMP'S WORK

In its annual report to Colombia's Congress, the Superior Judicial Council recognized the work of USAID's Justice Reform and Modernization Project. It referred to the programs aimed to certify quality for courts in Itagüí, Envigado and the development of a management model for Envigado's Judicial Services Center.

PROJECTS FINANCED BY USAID ARE AMONG 16 FINALISTS

EXCELLENCE IN JUSTICE FOR USAID PROGRAMS

The Supreme Indigenous Court of Tolima and CORNACESCUN received two honorable mentions from the Excellence in Justice Corporation.

The Excellence in Justice Corporation awarded its second "Excellence in Justice Prize", where two United States Agency for International Development-backed programs received honorable mentions.

For the Corporation, The prizes aim to provide “an incentive for those who view justice as a service and as a system in permanent transformation. They are intended to include the Judiciary, alternative forms of conflict resolution and the legal community in general.”

The first honorable mention went to the Supreme Indigenous Court of Tolima for its efforts to strengthen justice in their communities, resolve complex cases, develop indigenous rights and promote coordination among different jurisdictions.

The selection committee also awarded an honorable mention to the National Corporation of Conciliators from Soacha and



THE EXCELLENCE IN Justice Corporation recognized members of the Supreme Indigenous Court for developing effective ways for indigenous peoples to have better access to justice.

Cundinamarca (CORNACESCUN for its Spanish acronym), recognizing the collective manner in which cases are effectively resolved within communities in conflict.

These efforts have helped rebuild social peace in the municipality of Soacha and its

surrounding areas.

Between 2000 and 2008, Soacha conciliators received 17,280 requests for mediation and held 8,147 conciliation hearings. Of those, 88% resulted in agreements between the parties, according to the Corporation of Conciliators from Soacha.

COLOMBIAN YOUTH IN EQUAL COEXISTENCE

More than 100 youth organizations representatives from five Colombian regions gathered in Bogota D.C. from October 26-28 to discuss issues related to justice.

"The National Youth Forum in Peaceful Coexistence" focused on public policy guidelines for better access to justice and different ways to improve community relations.

The alliance now includes

groups representing Bogota – Cundinamarca; the Caribbean Coast Region; the Pacific Region; the Coffee Growers Axis and the North of Santander.

The Coalition brings together more than 300 youth organizations. It is an initiative of the USAID's Justice Reform and Modernization Project, in collaboration with the German Technical Cooperation Agency (GTZ). USAID's

investment totaled US\$ 38,000 in 2008.

The challenge for these entrepreneurial young is to expand the program nationwide, while also deepening its roots at the local provincial and regional levels. It revolves around achieving consolidation of the program at the national level without leaving behind the communal, district, departmental and regional processes.

CHILDREN LEARN THAT JUSTICE IS A RIGHT AND NOT A MIRACLE

PATAPLIN RATA-PLAN EDUCATED 30,000 CHILDREN ON JUSTICE

Thanks to the support of Bogota's Philharmonic Orchestra and USAID, the play reached over 30,000 children.

With the U.S. Ambassador to Colombia, William R. Brownfield, and Bogota's Mayor, Samuel Moreno Rojas, in attendance, the children of Colombia's capital enjoyed the start of a new season for the play "Pataplín Rata-Plán, Children for Justice".



THE INITIAL, goal was to present the play to 2,000 children. After the last nine showings, a total of 39,200 children had seen the play.

The play grew out of a proposal by the Carrera Theater Foundation in 2007 to develop a show for children covering issues related to justice and peaceful conflict resolution. United States Agency for International Development (USAID) backed the initiative.

This interactive play

invites children and their entire families to learn about justice and peaceful conflict resolution in a fun and lively way.

The play uses different songs and repetition of phrases that enable children to interact with the actors throughout the piece of art.

By the end of the season, nearly 40,000 children in Colombia attended the play, helping build credibility in the justice system and the institutions.

The initial goal was to present the play to 2,000 children. After the last nine showings, a total of 39,200 children had seen the play.

III UNIVERSITY MOCK TRIAL COMPETITION CONCLUDES IN CALI

About 330 law students from 10 universities in Valle, Cauca and Nariño, took part in the regional final of the Third University Mock Trial Oral Competition, held in Cali on Nov. 15. Two students from the Pontificia Universidad Javeriana in Cali were the winners.

The final contest consisted of two mock trials in which eight students put their knowledge to the test, strengthening skills and techniques used in the new Accusatory Penal System.

Similar contests have been held in Santander, Antioquia, and the Coffee Region, thanks to the joint support of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ).

In 2009, two new competitions are scheduled. The winners of each competition will compete with each other in a final national competition.

NEW OFFICES OPEN THEIR DOORS

STRENGTHENING PUBLIC DEFENSE

Two Public Defense Regional Training Centers, located in Pereira and Cali, and three Public Defense Special Support Offices (Oficinas Especiales de Apoyo- OEAs) in Ibagué, Cali and Villavicencio, opened their doors to the public. The U.S. Agency for International Development assisted the building and furnishing of these offices.

Colombia's Department of Public Defense offers free legal services to the defendant who is unable to afford legal representation. Access to legal services is among the priorities of USAID's Justice Reform and Modernization Project. The ability to guarantee high quality standards of legal defense provided for defendants helps to achieve an equitable, participatory and just society.



IN THE PHOTO Public Defender, Vólmar Pérez, cuts the ribbon during the inauguration of the Public Defense Regional Training Center in Pereira (Risaralda).

SATELLITE JUSTICE HOUSE IS INAUGURATED IN ZARAGOZA (ANTIOQUIA)

THE BAJO CAUCA ANTIOQUEÑO OPENS ANOTHER JUSTICE HOUSE

The Justice House of Zaragoza opened its doors to the public. It is the second in operation of five houses planned for the Bajo Cauca Antioqueño.

On November 8, the Minister of the Interior and Justice, Fabio Valencia Cossio, officially opened the Justice House of Zaragoza (Antioquia). The ceremony was attended by the Acting Governor for that Department, Andrés Julián Rendón, and the Municipality's Mayor, Víctor Darío Perlaza, among others.

This is the second of five satellite justice houses planned for the Regional Justice House of Cauca. Besides the Zaragoza House, a satellite justice house in El Bagre opened last September. Construction will begin soon on the three remaining justice houses in the municipalities of Cáceres, Nechí and Tarazá.

Financial resources for this construction came from a group of entities headed by the Ministry of the Interior and Justice, the Antioquia provincial government, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the municipality of Zaragoza, and two private companies, OCENSA (Oleoducto Central S.A.) and Oleoducto Central de Colombia (ODC). The total cost of the Justice House of



MINISTER Fabio Valencia invited the community to utilize the "magnificent" services of the Zaragoza Justice House.

Caucasia and its five satellite justice houses will be approximately US\$ 550,000, of which USAID will contribute around US\$ 234,000.

The Zaragoza House aims to promote peaceful resolution of disputes and improve access to formal, alternative and community justice. It will serve nearly 35,000 residents. Zaragoza has a significant population of Afro-Colombians and a small indigenous community. To date, the United States government has financed the construction of 48 of the 53 Justice Houses in Colombia.

The Zaragoza Justice House is approximately 3,873 square feet and brings together 13 agencies under one roof. They include: a Family Commissary, Police Inspection Office, Solicitor General Office Representatives, the Ombudsman Office, Labor Inspection Office, Community Development Office, the local District Attorney's Office, the Family Welfare Colombian Institute, the National Institute of Forensic Medicine & Forensic Science, an Office of the University of Antioquia, a Community Justice Office, Community Conciliators and Mediators, and an Indigenous and Afro-Justice.

RECOGNITION

5th ANNIVERSARY OF SOACHA JUSTICE HOUSE

The Soacha (Cundinamarca) Justice House held a celebration to commemorate its fifth anniversary.

Inaugurated on December 18, 2003, the House has helped approximately 300,000 people from its municipality and nearby communities.

It has focused on promoting women's rights, resolving conflicts through alternative methods (especially conciliation), and offering workshops and training sessions on legal rights and peaceful coexistence.

